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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 JERUSALEM 001105

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NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE, NSC FOR ABRAMS/WATERS

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [KWBG](#) [KPAL](#) [KDEM](#) [IS](#)
SUBJECT: SUPPORTING PRO-FATAH NGO'S IN NORTH RAMALLAH

REF: 2006 JERUSALEM 4172

Classified By: Consul General Jake Walles, per reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: In a June 6 meeting with PolChief and USAID/OTI Deputy Country Representative, Yousef Barakeh, the Fatah Secretary General in Jalazoun refugee camp and a member of the North Ramallah Fatah Committee outlined his efforts to strengthen Fatah in this politically competitive region that elected two Hamas PLC members. In coordination with the ConGen and USAID/OTI, Barakeh is attempting to create and strengthen a network of pro-Fatah NGOs. His activities seek to build the NGOs, credibility and increase their ability to respond to diverse constituencies by delivering services equal to or exceeding those currently provided by local Hamas organizations. END SUMMARY.

BARAKEH AS AN EMERGING FATAH LEADER

12. (C) Yousef Barakeh is a member of the North Ramallah Field Committee and was elected as the Fatah Secretary General for Jalazoun refugee camp in February 2007. ConGen and USAID/OTI staff have been coordinating with Barakeh to assess and determine how NGOs can respond to community needs in Jalazoun camp and the surrounding areas, which span two electoral districts. In a June 6 Ramallah meeting, Barakeh stressed the importance of "door-to-door grassroots outreach" and the need for Fatah to communicate with people "inside their homes." He noted that Hamas has used this approach effectively. The best way to do this, he said, is through a network of pro-Fatah NGOs with a common vision of grassroots reform who can effectively deliver services to a variety of constituencies. Barakeh has worked closely with the ConGen and USAID/OTI to identify and assemble under his leadership nine local NGOs that support different sectors such as women, children, youth, elders, and physically disabled citizens, and one organization which preserves Palestinian cultural heritage. Barakeh and USAID/OTI teams have conducted individual assessments with each NGO to determine how to best to increase their capacity to provide services and amplify their efforts. USAID/OTI is reviewing proposals for approximately USD 150,000 of in-kind assistance through its small grants mechanism. Assistance would vary by organization, but could include furnishings, computers, administrative equipment, youth sporting equipment, scouts uniforms, and other items. The NGOs are currently being vetted, a process which is expected to take six to eight weeks.

FOCUS ON WOMEN VOTERS

13. (C) Barakeh urged assistance to the Jalazoun Women's Program Center (WPC) in order to help redress Fatah's poor outreach to women. He said WPC's primary goal is to empower

women to play a more prominent role in their community by providing a venue where they can gather, discuss issues of interest, and receive training. To ensure Fatah control over the center's management, Barakeh established a Fatah field office on the building's first floor and "reshuffled" WPC staff to replace two Hamas-affiliated volunteers with a Fatah woman loyalist. Barakeh is seeking to increase vocational training opportunities and enhance the facilities to meet the growing demand of nearly 15 thousand camp residents. (Note: Per REFTEL, WPC's health/athletic center was established in 2005 through a USD 10,000 PRM grant under the Ambassador's Fund for Refugees.)

STRENGTHENING FATAH'S APPEAL

¶4. (C) Barakeh described the North Ramallah region, with Jalazoun camp as its political center, as an area where Hamas and Fatah vie for the same constituencies. He said Hamas has senior leadership in Jalazoun who target camp residents and the surrounding towns and villages. Both local PLC members are Hamas. (Note: Saleh Mubarak, from Jalzoun Camp, and Fadel Hamdan, from nearby Doura village, are currently in Israeli jails but have significant followings in the area.) Empowering a new pro-Fatah NGO network to deliver essential services would attract the attention of constituents, including those who voted for Hamas in 2006, Barakeh said. He questioned the utility of formal declarations of party membership, saying many local residents who claimed to be Fatah members in order to reap Fatah benefits, had voted for Hamas when Fatah failed to deliver. He said Hamas support in the area is declining, however, due to a lack of service delivery, visible Hamas internal divisions, and general economic decline. Asked how his efforts might connect with

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the work of the newly-formed Fatah Field Committees, Barakeh said he will work with anyone from Fatah who will support his grassroots efforts. Barakeh said his main objective is to see Fatah united, since he believes disunity was the main cause of its previous defeat.
WALLES